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Mayor Kelly appoints Mary Beth Ikard and Karitsa Mosley Jones to fill key vacancies in City Hall

Ikard will take the reins of city's communications, while Jones will head up Community Forward schools program

Chattanooga, Tenn. (Aug. 9, 2021) — Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly on Monday announced the appointment of Mary Beth Ikard — a veteran policy and public-relations practitioner for local, regional, and state government — as the city's Director of Communications, effective today.

Kelly also announced the appointment of Karitsa Mosley Jones, a member of the Hamilton County School Board, fellow at the city's Office of Early Learning, and licensed social worker, to head up the city's Community Forward Schools Partnership, also effective today.

Mary Beth Ikard



Ikard is the outgoing director of sustainability for Mayor John Cooper and the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. She was originally appointed in 2015 by then Mayor Megan Barry to advance policy on transit and transportation, in addition to sustainability.

Prior to working in the mayor's office, for more than five years she led communications for the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization — the lead policy, planning, and funding authority for surface transportation throughout the greater-Nashville region.

She also directed communications and marketing for Governor Phil Bredesen's Books from Birth Foundation, where she generated support for county affiliates of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. While at Katcher Vaughn and Bailey Public Relations, she also worked on BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee's health-prevention programs for children and youth. She began her career in the press office for the late Indiana Gov. Frank O'Bannon, and then moved into public affairs for the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration.

Ikard holds a B.A. in Journalism from Indiana University and Accreditation in Public Relations, and is an MFA candidate with the Sewanee School of Letters.

“Mary Beth’s yearslong commitment to public service and proven track-record of policy successes for local government make her uniquely qualified to lead communications for my administration,” said Kelly. “There’s no substitute for experience: Having worked directly for three mayors, as well as a board of city and county mayors from across Middle Tennessee, she knows exactly the types of challenges — and opportunities — that cities are facing in our state.”

Karitsa Mosley Jones



Mosley Jones is serving her second term on the Hamilton County School Board as the District 5 representative, where she has advocated for greater community engagement and closing achievement gaps in schools.

She is a Pritzker Fellow in Chattanooga’s Office of Early Learning, and is an adjunct professor in the Department of Social Work at UTC.

She is also a licensed social worker who has spent more than 12 years working to help families in our community, and was a member of the 2015 inaugural class of the Harvard Business School’s Young American Leaders program.

Mosley Jones earned her master’s degree in social work, and her bachelor’s degree in sociology and criminal justice from Alabama A&M University.

As the director of the Community Forward Schools, Mosley Jones will oversee a staff of seven who will work to connect students and parents to city resources and leverage the city’s community centers to better serve our students.

“Ensuring that every single child has access to an excellent education is the most important challenge — and the most important opportunity — facing our city,” Kelly said. “These young people are the future of Chattanooga; we have no greater opportunity or more urgent need for investment. I know that Karitsa is up to the task of leveraging city resources, community support, and critical partners for our schools and our students.”

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